RELIGION

I. Historical Background of the Religions of Inner Asia

791 795 Various religions have been strong in the Northwest, among them Shamanism, Buddhism, Nestorianism, Manichaeism, Confucianism, Taoism and Islam. The latter is the predominant religion among the Turks and the Dungans. Buddhism is the religion of the Mongols, Mongours, Shira Yögür and Tibetans. Nestorianism and Manichaeism have become extinct, but Confucianism and Taoism are still alive in Chinese communities (see China Handbook).

A. Shamanism

791 756 Shamanism is a pagan faith based upon concepts of demons and spirits, with whom the Shaman, or priest, attempts to maintain contact by either sending his soul to them or receiving them into his own soul. The Shaman usually functions in a self-induced trance, produced by taking alcoholic beverages, toadstool powder, et cetera. A high percentage of Shamans suffer from various neuroses, severe forms of hysteria, or epilepsy, and the selection of a new Shaman may be based upon such manifestations of a deviant personality. Sometimes, however, the position of Shaman is hereditary.

[787] [293] [296] [158] [428]

756 The Shaman is regarded as a mediator between man and the supernatural. He exercises his magic powers for such purposes as healing, rain-making, success in hunting, prevention of accidents, and divination. In central Asia, the common methods of divination are by the flight of birds and by scapulimancy, or interpretation of cracks on the shoulderblade of a sheep which has been treated over a fire. While functioning in his supernatural capacity, the Shaman wears a distinctive dress, usually a long robe decorated with metal discs, small bells and the claws of the totem birds.

[787] [292]

The training of a Shaman is long and involved, and he usually does not reach full professional status until the age of forty or fifty. Shamanists have no ecclesiastical organization, but rank Shamans on the basis of their success in dealing with the supernatural.

756 77 Besides the various ghosts, ancestral and animal spirits and other lesser supernatural beings, the Shamanists recognize a supreme being, the Tengri, who is the universe personified, God and heaven. He is the fountain of life, as he gives man his soul, and the fate of all peoples depends upon him. The Altaic people believe that the Tengri observes all and everything; no

171 776

/Chinese, Chinese Moslems and Sedentary Tibetans/.

712 361 different from the others. All the inns and shops were in the suburb. The people who owned them were descendants of a long line of old residents who took pride in the very exclusiveness which was imposed by their isolation. Few of them ever left the place, and many had never even seen the neighboring town of Suchow. An inner gate led to the military section of the fortress, where life was entirely different. The yamen, built in traditional Chinese 712 701 style, was the center of garrison life, and here the general and his family lived, guarded day and night by sentries! Officers marched in and out, and much official business was done, for this was an important military center and the officer in command held a high rank. Unlike the old residents, the military hated the place and seized every chance of being away from it, bitterly resenting the appointment to such a lonely outpost, and longing to be transferred elsewhere. Nothing would have induced them to walk outside the Northwest Gate where that fateful Gobi Desert stretched, and their eyes always turned longingly to the city where, twenty miles away, there was solace, gaiety and life.

712 512 517 If the men disliked Kiayukwan (Chia-yu-kuan), the women hated it. There is nothing to do here all day but sit and listen to that howling wind, they would say frequently.

[529] [521] [796] The ladies of the yamen would gather in each other's rooms, play ma-jong for small stakes, sip tea and gossip. Often the game was prolonged until midnight, with interludes for drawing on the opium pipe, but the next morning's reaction brought a fierce hatred of this place where desert demons hid themselves in dust-clouds and whistled through every crevice of the crazy [569] buildings. The little slave girls learnt to dread the days of blizzard when their mistresses' nerves were tensed and blows were dealt out irritably for the slightest offense.

[796] [574] [545] Each festival of the year was the occasion for a welcome social function, and during the summer months life was made brighter by the frequent exchange of visits with the officials from Suchow. Twice a year a theatrical troupe visited the fortress, and for the three days of its performance all the inhabitants enjoyed themselves and made merry. But it was soon over, and when the properties were packed and carts carried both actors and their belongings elsewhere, life in the fortress relapsed into desolating stagnation.

712 485 484 The third category of human beings to be met in Kiayukwan were the travellers who came, lodged for a night or two at the inns, and forthwith went their ways. Every sunset and every sunrise they arrived, some taking night stages and some travelling by day, but all were travel worn and weary....

484 712 These formed the stream of living men and women who moved up and down the great road, acquainted with life and full of knowledge about distant places. They were familiar with the large

/Chinese, Chinese Moslems and Sedentary Tibetans/

484 cities and the great waterways of China, and had traversed her
712 wide plains by the iron track at speed which seemed fabulous to the owners of these little shops. The static inhabitants saw them come, heard them talk, watched them go, but failed to understand the matters of which they spoke, for, to them everything which they had never seen was unreal, vague, remote and seemed to bear no re'ation to daily life. Enough for them that today they [432] had sold three boxes of matches, two packets of cigarettes and handful of salt. They cared little for travellers' tales and probably believed none of them....

712 The restless soldiers of the garrison rushed to and from the
512 large town, but the old inhabitants cared for none of these things,
[701] and when the fortress gates were closed each night they put up
[352] the shutters of the little shops and crept under miserable cover-
[276] lets to lie on the mud kangs, fill their opium pipes and escape into the land of illusion and dreams, which was the only wider horizon that they knew." (pp. 17-20).

361 While she was visiting in Tun-huang Miss Cable observed:
443 "The people of Tunwhang (Tun-huang) viewed themselves as the
[186] elite of Gobi land, and were abnormally proud of their oasis. They had plenty of money to spend and opened their markets freely to goods from other places, but prided themselves on being a self-supporting community, not only in respect of food, but also in regard to brides and bridegrooms, and they did not approve of marriages arranged between their own children and those of other
181 towns." (ibid.) The people in this district were very conservative.
436 "One sign of its deep-seated conservatism," observed Miss Cable,
441 "was the backward system of money exchange which it retained. Long after the silver dollar had become the common basis of coinage on the main road, Tunhwang businessmen looked askance at it, and preferred the shoe of silver which was chipped down, weighed up and exchanged for copper coinage. Here again Tunhwang set its standard by allowing one hundred worn and valueless cash to be introduced into each string of a thousand. It became therefore worthwhile to collect these useless copers in other towns, cart them to Tunhwang and dispose of them there. When the reluctance to admit the silver dollar was finally overcome, merchants still discriminated between different issues and refused one or the other according to fancy. The coin stamped with the dragon was depreciated in favor of one designated as the 'standing man' which was H ngkong currency. The dollar bearing the head of Yuan Shih-kai found favor, and for some reason the third-year issue was more highly valued than any other, but when a new coin stamped with the head of Sun Yat-sen appeared, this Gobi town absolutely refused to recognize it because the new president's effigy was small and unimpressive. No other explanation was offered than the words 'The head seems small', but no one would use it.

159 under the Ma family in Chinghai Province started with their
614 father, Ma Lin, who devoted his efforts toward the promotion
635 of education within the province. After Ma Lin died, his brother,
Ma Ch'i, took over the administration. But when the war with
[648] Japan began in 1937, Ma Pu-fang was given the position of governor of Chinghai, and at the same time he shouldered the tasks of leading the Kuomintang and commanding the troops within that province.

159 Ma Pu-fang was a career army officer. He started as a
[70] commanding officer of a batallion, and gradually climbed up to the post of commander of an army. When his uncle, Ma Ch'i,
[635] was governor of Chinghai before the Sino-Japanese War, he became a member of the provincial government. When he finally took over the administrative job in Chinghai in 1937, he was one of the youngest governors in China.

159 For more than thirteen years, 1937-1950, he held the posi-
635 tion of governorship. During his administration, particularly
185 during the war years, he aimed at the following six main tasks: First, he organized the Pao-chia system not only among the Chinese and Moslems, but also among the Mongols and Tibetans in his province. Second, he trained the local militia for the
[806] purpose of maintaining local order. Third, he was very strict in carrying out the policy of elimination of opium. Fourth, he
[871] conducted the movement of compulsory education aiming at the total elimination of illiteracy within Chinghai. As a result of his policy, in a single year more than a hundred thousand people learned to read. In addition, there were 8 middle normal schools, 131 primary schools and 805 grade schools in that
[499] province. The fifth task was to construct highways, and during his administration, more than two thousand kilometers of highways were constructed. The sixth point was afforestation. Every person was compelled to plant five to ten trees a year, and as a result, more than seven million trees had been planted during those war years.

159 Being a Moslem himself and realizing the complexity of
77 religions in Chinghai, Ma Pu-fang was cautious in his handling
64 of different religious groups. On the whole he worked toward
635 religious harmony, and his policy was one of equal treatment toward all tribes. He chose his personnel regardless of religion or race, on the basis of capacity and personality. Thus he was generally trusted by all religious groups in his province.

159 When the Communists began their campaign in 1949, they
669 pushed their way to the Northwest. Ma Pu-fang was appointed director of the Administrative Headquarters of the Northwest, succeeding General Chang Chih-chung. Joining forces with Ma Hung-k'uei, he directed the defense of the Northwest. Unfortunately, all his attempts failed and by October, 1949, the

2: Teichman G-5 (1919) 1921 AF13 Northwest China AF13

road, here a good cart track, runs across an undulating wheat prairie, dotted with hamlets and walled farms, with the Wei River out of sight on the right hand, and the great barrier of the Ch'inling mountains on the left. Three townships are passed, Yapei, Hengch'u, and Huaiya, the second being of some interest as the home of a famous Sung Dynasty philosopher. The amount of wheat grown on these plains of Central Shensi is very great, especially nowadays since the suppression of opium cultivation. There is no better wheat flour in China than that of Shensi, and it forms the staple food of the population, eaten in the form of bread (*mo*) and macaroni (*kua mien*). With this excellent wheat flour, good mutton, and plenty of game in the mountains, the foreign traveller is well off as regards food. A sound rule for travel in the interior of China is to avoid all tinned foods and rely on native supplies cooked in foreign style; the former only increase one's baggage loads and are quite unnecessary; native food made up in the native style is unappetising to most foreigners as well as being dangerously dirty.

Mei Hsien, a second class district city, is a small place, but like Chouchih is the centre of a rich agricultural region comprising the plain between the Ch'inling Shan and the River Wei. The latter flows a few li to the north of the town. The city has suffered greatly from rebellions and brigandage during recent years.

From Mei Hsien to Fenghsiang Fu is called 110 li, but the road being good and mostly level, the distance can be covered in one long march. The Wei River, in the dry season a thick yellow stream a hundred yards wide and few feet deep, is crossed by a ferry and the road then runs westwards with the river on the left hand and a loess bluff on the right for 35 li to the village of Ts'aichia P'o. At the time of our visit this low-lying land was almost entirely devoted to indigo and dotted with the peculiar-looking brick pits in which the plants are mashed in preparing the dye. This is an old industry revived on account of the scarcity of aniline dyes. The indigo forms a useful rotation crop for the relief of the land exhausted by the everlasting wheat. We saw little else but wheat, cotton, and indigo during our tour of the loess of Central Shensi, growing on

T.T. the uplands, river plains, and irrigated lands respectively.

2: Teichman G-5 (1919) 1921 AF13 Northwest China AF13

Many villages are passed on this stage, the largest being Ssushihli P'u and Chaochiakengtzu, 40 and 50 li out respectively. Ningyuan (new name Wushan Hsien) is a pleasant little city lying in the irrigated valley of the Wei River producing heavy crops of corn and hemp.

From Ningyuan to Fuchiang is a long stage called 100 li. The road continues down the valley, crossing a loess ridge just before getting to the large market village of Lomen Chen, 30 li out. The valley on this stretch of the road is very fertile, thickly populated, and well timbered. Fuchiang is quite a wealthy town, and this part of Kansu is probably the richest in the province, with the exception perhaps of the Ninghsia plains. It used to be a centre for the opium trade, now more or less extinct. The poppy was formerly cultivated extensively in all the irrigated areas in Kansu, and the product was considered the best native-grown opium in China and was in great demand in Peking, Tientsin, and North China generally.

At Fuchiang the road leaves the Wei valley and ascending a gorge in the loess hills, crosses a steep little pass and descends to the large village of Kuantzu Chen, 40 li out. From here it continues down this valley, that of a tributary of the Wei, passes through a stony gorge, and emerges at the village of Liushihli P'u, 60 li from Fuchiang, whence there is a good road through cultivated fields down the valley for the remaining 60 li to Ch'in Chou. The latter, now known as T'ienshui Hsien, consists of no less than five cities built one alongside the other, and is one of the largest and most important towns in the province. A considerable trade is carried on with Shensi and Szechuan, the exports consisting of the regular products of Kansu, such as wool, hides, deer's horns, furs, musk, rhubarb, mountain medicines, tobacco, and opium, and the imports of silk, tea, piece goods, etc. The Szechuanese element in the population is considerable, and the proximity of that province is in many ways noticeable. It is not a Mahomedan centre, but there is a small community of Moslem merchants engaged as usual in the horse and cattle trade and in the export of hides to Hankow. Two roads lead from here into Shensi, one *via* Hui Hsien to Hanchung, and the other *via* Ch'ingshui to Fenghsiang; two roads also lead into Szechuan, one *via*

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927
AF13 Northwest China AF13

rouse, and together they will then join the Shensi sitter, when, their band being complete, they will accomplish their long-appointed mission of raising mankind.

At nightfall we passed the Kansu border. The first incident which made us aware of this fact was an official proclamation with the two Chinese ideographs, meaning Kansu, heading it. Simultaneously the character of the road changed, and we found ourselves moving in the darkness through an avenue of stately trees, our hearts beating high, for we had now reached the Province indicated on our 'Sealed Orders,' although we knew not as yet the locality to which we were going.

That night, our first in Kansu, our bed was in a stable. Merely a cave hollowed out of the loess-cliff, it held a little mud *kang*,[1] on which the travelling carter was wont to sleep while the mules fed at his side. The walls were black with the dirt of generations, the floor was littered with damp stable-manure, and our hand-luggage was laid in the manger. The door was a low, irregular aperture; no opening had been left for a window; the flicker of the linseed-oil lamp filled the cave with heavy shadows, and though the night was very cold the *kang* had not been warmed.

We had often tried to picture the real conditions of the inn at Bethlehem, and it seemed to us that night that we had come much nearer to their realisation.

By the side of our cave, raised three feet from the ground, was a small hollowed recess, about the size of a large baker's oven. The opening was screened by a filthy, hanging rag, and within lay three men, tasting the sensuous enjoyment of the opium pipe. The space was so small that the feet of the smokers were thrust outside, and though the night was bitter and their

[1] A brick or mud bed heated with a fire.

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927
AF13 Northwest China AF13

conditions unspeakably wretched, they yet cared not at all, for they had temporarily banished reality, and moved among elusive shadows, until the sentinel grey dawn should recall them to the grim world of Fact.

The largest city through which we passed was Pingliang. On the steps of a temple outside the city gate, we saw a motley crew of several hundred beggars basking in the midday sunshine. They displayed such a variety of physical ills, and provided such an exhibition of tatterdemalion garments, as to make one question how existence under such conditions could be endured. Nor can the life of a Kansu beggar hold any sense of security or hope of alleviation. All too familiar is the sight, on a winter's morning, of the naked corpse of a man, woman or child, frozen to death on the side path; and there is no one to remove the corpse, unless it be the tradesman, under whose frontage he sought shelter and died. The gathering which we witnessed at Pingliang was an assembly of the Beggars' Trade(less) Union, when they collect an enforced contribution from each business house in the town—a tax which none dared refuse, since their appointed Head controlled a band of defenders, who were ready to deal summarily with any shopkeeper who might offer a blow in lieu of the dole. The police were helpless in face of this Corporation; and thus the beggar asserted his right to live.

For an hour our litters threaded their way through the crowded streets before we reached the Mission Compound, where we were the guests of a Swedish missionary and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Törnvall. Our hearts warmed with admiration for the unassuming man, on whose face long suffering had left indelible marks. With him we visited the spacious buildings of

5: Tafel--302 - T-3 (1905-1908) 1914 AJ1 Tibet AJ 1
N. W. China AF13

forth from their hips, either sideways or forward and backward or even diagonally, according to the available space, always with an ingratiating smile - I was getting quite dizzy from it all. Now they became animated. The spell was broken. Drinking games were begun. Everyone wanted to tell an amusing story. Funny riddles and witty sayings were brought up as well as caustic stories of how mandarin so-and-so made a fool of his superiors and subordinates and directed a golden spring onto his acres. Even after the meal was over the party did not break up immediately, as is customary and even good form after a more formal dinner. In the adjoining room Japanese cigarettes and tobacco pipes as well as rice wine were offered and in one corner on a kang where the host slept there was a place for opium-lovers. As usual the pipes had already been prepared by the servants. The opium was first offered to each one in turn, and to me first because I was the guest of honor. I, of course, politely declined. I would not even have known for sure how to go about smoking opium, for it is an art. But the second in order, the colonel, then the major, and on down the line to the lieutenants with the charred soles, all of them lay down one after another on the kang which was covered with the most elegant knotted rug from Turkistan and heated from underneath with horse dung, lifted up the richly ornamented opium pipe with both hands and, with a silent nod, as though inviting the other guests and the host, took a few puffs and handed the pipe to the next person. Thereupon the smokers, wittier and more animated, again took part in the general conversation.

C 574 521
C 574 276

* * * * * *

/183/

CHAPTER V

To the Koko Nor

T 19

In a small valley meadow a few hours south of the city of Dankar I had bought eight yaks from Tibetans of Tombum da who had come to Dankar to carry on trade. With these eight yaks and five mounted servants whom I had armed, as well as a few pack ponies, I left Dankar on January 11, accompanied also by a sergeant with a few soldiers. Ten kilometers farther west I passed the last frontier guards (Plate XXXIX) and before nightfall I came to the Gomba soma monastery (Chinese: hsin se, meaning "new monastery"). By journeying via Gomba soma, I was on the military road to the north

The crumbled loam walls and the old roofless yamen and temple buildings lay bleak and desolate when we passed through. We were still merely crawling along at a snail's pace. In the interior of the city, in a corner of an old ruin, we brewed our tea once more before we traveled on into the night. In spite of our weariness, none of us wanted to spend the night here. The cold which set in anew after sundown was too intense. We preferred to fumble along across the barren steppes. Even though we were now going along a well-traveled caravan road, we had difficulty in finding our way in the dark to Schara khoto. We did not reach it until morning. We had covered 140 kilometers on our flight. All of us had sore feet from the solidly frozen riding boots, and the three rescued ponies were also near exhaustion because they were too heavily loaded.

Schara khoto (1) is today the farthest Chinese military outpost from Kansu. The Chinese government had stationed here a schu be (first lieutenant), a lieutenant and a few sergeants with 30-40 men (belonging to the green banner). They were armed with swords and matchlocks and a few old German drums and French horns. Thus, the detachment does not play a very important role. The soldiers even have difficulty defending themselves against the attacks of marauding Tibetans. There is an old wall but it is so large that it would take at least a regiment to defend it. There is also a large old parade ground. Between this and the city which is empty today there live about thirty Chinese families who cultivate a few small acres in the vicinity, raising barley and wild oats. Nothing else grows here. It is an unspeakably miserable spot.

1. A Mongolian name meaning "yellow city." The Chinese call the town Scha la ku to ard say that this means "city of the green meadow."

One of the Chinese immediately received us very hospitably in his mud hut, and turned over his large warm kang to us. Without wasting any words he immediately prepared a few opium pipes for us, for the Chinese say this is the best restorative if one is over-tired. I was the only one who did not smoke and I did not wake up until the next night, whereas my companions, all of whom had smoked, walked about vigorously early in the day.

Two days later I traveled back to Dankar. On this stretch I was accompanied by fifteen armed men and half way to the city I was

N. in China AF 13

[276] 525 It is also well known, of course, that relatively few Chinese are able to withstand certain temptations, that they can easily be persuaded to the excessive use of stimulants. Countless millions of Chinese succumbed to opium and every visitor to China, even those who have seen only a few coastal towns, is struck by the astonishing number of gambling games that exist. Everywhere there are countless professional gamblers and in most cities there are special places where these gamblers meet. In Wei yüan bu this place was a large open garden. This was sought out above all by countless Chinese from Hsining fu and by Mohammedans of the vicinity. There were almost always more than one hundred players to be seen there. They sat in a circle on the ground, squatting on their heels, kneeling or with legs tucked under. They played go pai, a cross between our cards and dominoes, in which betting is part of the game itself. Among other games there was also one money game often played which corresponded to our "heads and tails."

The amount of money that changed hands was enormous, especially if one takes into account the currency prevailing there. Many a peasant and day laborer who entered the fair grounds with his entire year's earning in his pockets, left it a beggar, after having gambled away even his holiday clothes. No wonder that heads grew hot and hands trembled with excitement.

525 158 On one of the first days when I visited the gambling place one of the Mohammedans who the summer before had carried on the dangerous occupation of gold-washing, far in the interior of Tibet, had just lost his entire yield amounting to 40 taels. As soon as his money was gone he began ranting blasphemously. At first his words made sense, but soon he had /254/ talked himself into such a passion that he began hitting the by-standers senselessly. At the very first blows the Chinese cried: "He has gone mad!" and before he could do any serious harm he lay bound on the ground. The diagnosis which the Chinese had made so surprisingly quickly, proved to be correct. I sent to my pharmacy in order to give the man a sedative. But before it arrived - a half day after the attack - he died in the arms of the ahun and his father who, in despair, had scratched his own face bloody. Two similar cases occurred during the fair. They reminded me of the well-known cases of Malayans running amok. Mr. Ridley told me later on that such seizures are remarkably frequent in and around Hsining among Dungan as well as Chinese. He attributed the phenomenon to the high altitude.

N.W. China AF13

out of the question. During the second watch we were visited by 200
wolves and their constant howling made sleep impossible. My dogs
were mad at this disturbance and answered with angry barking, and
the surrounding rocky mountains intensified this concert of the steppes
with endless echoes. On the third day we again came across traces of 361
human beings, finally discovered a distinct path and soon saw people. [563
We found a few dozen tents of the Tscham ri Tibetans, and around noon
we pitched our tents on the small grassy plain in front of the Schara
khoto walls (Plate LVII).

The extremely jovial Schu be Tsch'en, the captain of Schara
khoto, with whom I was well acquainted from my previous visit, ar-
rived accompanied by his non-commissioned officers and official
interpreters and was friendliness personified, although he must have
cursed me inwardly for once again disturbing his peace and meditation.
After the initial formal greeting, we embraced like old friends and
exchanged presents. He asked me above all for European gunpowder
because he could not get any at all or none that was good, from his
superiors. His thick accent, his many "f" and "pf" sounds instead of
the North Chinese "sch" and "tsch" respectively, betrayed the fact
that he was a man of the people from "Lan dpfu" (Lanchow fu). He
was an officer who had risen from the ranks. This schu be did me a
great favor by sending a messenger the very first evening to the amban
of Hsining fu to inquire after the promised /280/ escort. I had noti-
fied the amban of my change of plans and the reasons as soon as I got
to Kue de and had reminded the old gentleman of his promise. But up
to now I had received no answer.

At Captain Tsch'en's orders, a uniformed soldier with a loaded gun 701
always had to help my men tend the animals during my five-day stay
at Schara khoto. However, none of the soldiers inspired me with con-
fidence. They were 15 and 16-year old boys, and yet the Chinese
mature more slowly than Westerners. Besides, the entire garrison in- [276]
dulged in opium and were, without exception, obsessed with gambling. [525]
And indeed, what else should these people do with their time in this
godforsaken place? Once a month there is drill, otherwise, except
for carrying messages, there is no official duty for the men. Through-
out the rest of China the soldiers can carry on a little trade or agricul-
ture on the side. But in Schara khoto there is nothing to sell, the
caravans pass heedlessly by and on the few fields only wild oats grows
and even that ripens only every few years. It is easy to see how little
profit there is in animal husbandry, considering how much is stolen,
for Tibetans passing by take all the animals that are not carefully
[after leaving Ts'ien hu tsch'eng— Analyst]

000 over with hoar frost. The valley of Schara khoto was enveloped in thick white clouds of fog. Only the low pass in the southwest, which separated us from the open Tibetan steppes, from Kou wei, from "outside the gates of the kingdom," it alone lay open and free. From there a stiff, cold wind blew down upon us and made the morning even more uncomfortable. Snow lay round about. It crunched under our steps. Only stones and a few grass tips rose above the white covering, for trees are entirely absent in the valley of Schara khoto and only a few bushes remained on isolated, steep northerly slopes. Even here at Schara khoto I was already surrounded by the barren, wild and magnificent spectacle of the high plateau which again and again entices me with its elemental power (Plate LVIII).

In order to spare my caravan as much as possible I had rented four additional Tibetans and forty yak oxen from the vicinity of Schara khoto for the first few days; four strong, tall chaps who leapt about with their restive, sharp-horned cattle. It was a pleasure to watch them. In a jiffy the animals were loaded. One of the men began humming some insignificant, meaningless words of four syllables and in the rapid rhythm of these syllables the packs were tied to the saddles. During their work the chaps had let their fur coats slip down over their shoulders, their tanned bodies were exposed to the icy wind and weather. They were Fan tse true of the Ts'ao ti.

701 Shortly after seven o'clock we set out in five large groups. Behind
276 each group rode a few drivers with reserve horses and a few mules. The ten men belonging to the captain of Schara khoto kept to themselves. They alone went on foot and wore sandals. They carried a large red flag as well as two small donkeys shivering with cold, which were carrying their huge but ragged tent, cooking pots, a few fork guns and swords. The group of soldiers looked pitifully miserable and more like marauders than like an imperial escort just leaving its garrison. Each one of these heroes, of course, carried his opium, and all of them were so dependent on this elixir of life that they had to stop every two hours en route and lie down on the steppes in order to smoke a few puffs, otherwise their legs would have given way. Surely, all that can be expected of a troop in good fighting trim! In Kansu it was difficult to find people who did not smoke opium. A great deal of it was grown in this province and the price was extraordinarily low, so that everyone here could afford this luxury. In selecting my servants and the people accompanying my actual caravan I had the greatest difficulty finding non-smokers.